



U.S. Department of Transportation

For more info contact:

[LT Ben Benson](#)  
(619) 683-6499  
(619) 683-6470

U.S. Coast Guard  
Marine Safety Office San Diego  
2716 N. Harbor Drive  
San Diego, CA 92101



## United States Coast Guard Marine Safety Office San Diego

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Earth Day 2002:

# San Diego's Coast Guard continues to keep our waters clean

## ***- Port Security is not the only job -***

SAN DIEGO – Despite greatly increased Port Security duties in the wake of the September 11<sup>th</sup> terrorist attacks, the Coast Guard remains committed to protecting the sensitive marine environments of San Diego and the Colorado River. In addition to minimizing oil spills and their effect, the Coast Guard is getting boaters to properly dispose their sewage and is increasing public awareness programs.

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Coast Guard Marine Safety Office San Diego's area of responsibility includes some 70 Navy ships, 27 port facilities that handle oil, 42 marinas and fuel docks, and 700 square miles of navigable water along the Colorado River.

In the year 2001, the Coast Guard investigated 336 oil spills, an increase from 256 in 2000. The good news is that majority of these spills were less than one gallon. The Coast Guard's greatly increased Port Security surveillances activities plus continued efforts to increase pollution reporting may have led to more spills being discovered rather than an actual increase in spills, potentially accounting for the increase in the number of spills reported. The overall trend of oil spills since 1996 has been decreasing.

***To report a pollution incident  
call the Coast Guard's  
National Response Center at  
800-424-8802.***

The Coast Guard works in concert with other federal and state agencies to prevent environment damage from oil spills by (1) investigating reports of spills, (2) ensuring that spills are cleaned up when possible, (3) holding spillers accountable and (4) working with mariners to identify and fix the causes of the spills.

Another environmental concern is sewage from boats. Within three miles from shore, it is illegal to discharge sewage from a vessel's holding tank untreated. It should be noted that within San Diego Bay, even treated discharges are prohibited.

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The Coast Guard has also made specific efforts to educate marinas and boaters on the locations and use of the 13 sewage pump-out facilities available to San Diego's boaters...and they seem to be listening. Use of pump-out facilities is up some 50%. A list of these facility locations is available online at [www.uscg.mil/d11/sandiego/mso](http://www.uscg.mil/d11/sandiego/mso).

Through its outreach programs such as the "Dock Walkers" and "Sea Partners", the Coast Guard Marine Safety Office in San Diego also educates boaters and their children of the impact of marine pollution on the environment.

The mission of the Coast Guard's Sea Partners program is to educate the public on how they can help keep our marine environment clean. This program explains the sources of marine pollution and the impact it has on us all. In FY 2001 the Sea Partners reached a record 15,000 people at 39 events and in only the first half of FY 2002 has already reached over 9,000 people at 21 events.

The programs are appropriate for all ages and are available free of charge to organizations including schools, civic groups and marinas. To schedule a Sea Partners event contact Lieutenant Julie Fritz at (619) 683-6307 or by e-mail to [jfritz@d11.uscg.mil](mailto:jfritz@d11.uscg.mil).

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